1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

This led to a separation between the brothers and they formed two divisions of the same family. The elder brother was the head of the family of Rautiya Kols and the younger of the Kurha Kols. 564 773

Another story relates that there were once five brothers of the same *kurhi*. Due to lack of food they were forced to separate: one went to the Binj mountains and founded the Binj *kurhi*; another went to a Thakuriya house, found shelter there, and from him are descended the Thakuriya Kols; another who took refuge with the Kumhars, the potters, was the ancestor of the Kurha sept. It is not unlikely that these stories contain the truth that this *kurhi* may have arisen from some marriage with Kumhars or perhaps miscegenation with them, or it may have reference to some occupational adventure on the part of some Kols.

Apparently the use of an earthen vessel by one sub-group does not prevent marriage within the whole group, nor does it limit it to that group, for marriages are possible between them and the Kathautiya Rautiyas who use wooden vessels from which to eat. There is the restriction, though, that Kurhas and Kathautiyas should not eat together unless they are related by marriage, and when this is the case they may compromise by the use of the ordinary brass plate. In a certain centre we were told that the only "pure Rautiyas" were those who used the *kurha* and that there were also definite marriage restrictions between them and the users of the wooden bowl. This, if ever true, is disappearing. 564 [264]

10. *Kathautiya.* Evidence goes to show that this *kurhi* is also a sub-group of the Rautiyas and differs from the Kurhas in that its members eat from a wooden bowl, called *kathauta* or *kathota*. The women folk, and occasionally the men, wear bits of wood in the lobes of their ears. During childhood the hole in the lobe is enlarged by the insertion of fibres from weeds, and from time to time a new bit is inserted in the attempt to enlarge the hole. We did not find that the Kathautiya Kols were consistent in the use of the wooden dish. At Sihora they told us that while they were Kathautiyas they had nevertheless given up the use of the *kathauta* and had adopted the ordinary brass plate. In other centres, notably one near Katni, they still use the bowl and cling to the custom tenaciously. As far as possible, they declared, all food should be prepared in wooden vessels, and it is expected that they should eat their food from such vessels. They do not manufacture their own *kathautas*, nor is any particular kind of wood used, but the dishes are made by Hindu carpenters from such wood as is available. At the time of death or eclipse of sun or moon the Kurha Kols must throw out all their earthenware dishes; the [415 264] [304 301] [178] [184] [252] [439] [82] [168 415]

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

Kathautiyas also throw out their earthenware vessels, but not the wooden ones which are considered to be unaffected by these occurrences. This may be due to Hindu influences.

It was intimated that hypergamy is occasionally practised with the Thakuriyas but in such cases it appears that the girls are "kept" rather than "married". One group of Kathautiyas asserted their superiority over the Thakuriyas and claimed that if a Thakuriya girl came to live with a Kathautiya boy, the Thakuriyas could take her back; but that they would never take back one of their girls who went to live with the Thakuriyas.

Some Kols stated that Binj, Kathariya and Kulmangans are types of Rautiya Kols, but the best evidence appears to be otherwise and these groups are treated separately below.

The use of the word "Rautiya" is not confined to the Kols. There is a Munda tribe in Chota Nagpur called Rautiyas and a few members of this tribe are found in the Jashpur State of the Central Provinces. It is also the name of a subcaste of Dahait, a mixed caste of village watchmen of the Jubbulpore and Mandla districts, and several of their subcaste names bear a close resemblance to those of the Kols. It is also a sub-caste of the Kawars and of a section of the Chamars and Rawats (Ahir).[1] The other subgroups of Rautiyas as noted above were not in use elsewhere except that among the Darzis, or tailors there is a Kathautiya subdivision.[2]

2. *Thakuriyas.* Russell and Hiralal[3] are of the opinion that this word is derived from *thakur* meaning "a lord", and they trace this *kurhi* to the intermarriage of Rajput males with Kol females. Such intermarriage probably followed the gradual penetration of the Rajputs into the regions occupied by the Kols. The stories given below concerning the origin of the Thakuriyas probably reflect a long period in which there was a considerable mixture of blood.

According to one story a certain Rautiya Kol had two wives who often quarrelled and the husband saw fit to scold the elder of the two. As a result she left the protection of the Kol and in anger went to the house of the *malguzar* of the village who happened to be a Thakur. She began to live on the veranda of his house, and earned her food with her own hands in any way she could. After some months she gave birth to a son and the Thakur sent word to this effect to her husband, with the request that he should come and take the mother and child

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, p. 402.
2 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 376.
3 *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 309.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

yellow *haldi* water and keeps it in a number of *lotas*. As the guests are about to depart the women appear with the *haldi* water and *kajra* (lamp-black), the latter being in the form of a paste. The yellow water is sprinkled over the departing guests and the lamp-black is applied just below the eyes. This is considered auspicious and both are believed to have a protective significance. In jest the *kajra* is sometimes applied to other parts of the face and hearty laughs and ridicule result, all of which the party must bear cheerfully. The girl's mother should sprinkle the *haldi* water on the boy's father and after she has done this and put the colour below his eyes she holds her brass *lota* before him and he is expected to drop some money into it—at least one rupee. The rest of the men are then sprinkled by the other women and are also asked to give a gift, but not as much as the father gave. The women then courteously salute and go off taking with them the *lotas* containing the coins.

For a brief time the men of the two parties remain seated together, eat *pan supari* and pass around the *hukka* for a smoke. Finally the boy's party gets up and all go to the edge of the village together where they embrace and separate. This ends the first part of the wedding cycle.

(2) *Domestic Preparations.* The time that is to elapse between the writing of the *lagan* and the *sadi* is fixed by the *lagan* itself and depends on several factors of an astrological nature. Usually there is less than a month between them. During this period there are active preparations in both houses as certain important things must be accomplished.

In the girl's village some uncooked rice coloured with *haldi* is taken around by members of the family and given to those who are to be invited to the ceremonies. With the rice the time and place of the ceremonies are made known. There should be plenty of supplies of food on hand and among the things listed there should be *sendur*, a *dauri* (small basket), new clothes, cash for small gifts and payments, rice, pulse, especially *urad* pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*) and wheat.

(a) *Mangarmati.* The *mangarmati* or *magarmati* is a ceremony whereby a certain amount of earth is obtained from which *chulhas*, or earthen fireplaces, are to be constructed. This ceremony, which is performed at both homes and on the same night, is essentially alike in both the houses and must be performed after sunset. Only the women take part in the gathering of the sacred earth, but we were allowed to watch a *mangarmati* ceremony in the Kaimur hills. It was found that a portion of the courtyard just in front of the house had

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

776 and *devis*. For example, it is stated that he is able to send certain
782 diseases such as smallpox and cholera. But while he may send them,
[783] it is of no use to ask him to banish them; for this a lesser deity like Khermai should be invoked. It is only if she fails, and if it seems necessary to avert further distress, that they will call to him and promise him that if he will save them they will send for a *pandit* and have a *katha* in the name of Bhagawan. It is our opinion that there is little trace, if any, of a higher conception of Bhagawan among the Kols of this area.

776 The contacts of the Kols with higher Hinduism is feeble and
177 markedly inconsistent. Both Vishnuite and Sivaite elements are inextricably mixed, and while Rama, Krishna and other *avataras* of Vishnu are known and stories about them are related, they have nevertheless almost no significance in actual religious ceremonies. Again, while the phallic symbols characteristic of Sivaites are not often used by Kols, nor Sivaite temples frequented, nevertheless Kali, [782] the wife of Siva, is propitiated. Taken as a whole, the Kol worship has in it but little of adoration. It is mostly a matter of propitiation. When asked why they do not worship in certain near-by Hindu temples, the answer has been that their fathers never worshipped there and why should they.

771 NATURE WORSHIP. In connection with the worship of the Supreme One, mention should be made of the relation of the Kols to
776 the forces of nature, so often deified in Hindu thought. Primitive
821 peoples all seem to have respect for the powers of the sky, air and earth; and while in the case of the Kols it appears to have lost its primitive expression, and become Hindu in ideology, it is nevertheless apparent in their thought.

The Sun. The Sun is usually thought of as a great God, a beneficent deity who is the source of all heat and light. It is stated that their forefathers worshipped the sun, and that they do also, but on examination this worship turns out to be very formal. The village shrine often faces the rising sun, but no image of the sun is ever made. He is often called *Suryanarayana*, Sun-God.

[514] No disrespect should be shown to the sun. When going to the fields for a call of nature, the Kol never squats without first ascertaining where the sun is, and as far as possible keeps it always to his right. The back, the front, and especially the left hand should never be toward it at such times.

The Moon. Some Kols consider the moon a goddess, while others do not seem to regard it in the category of deity at all. They

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

say there is nothing one does in relation to it. The moon is thought of as feminine and the sun as masculine, for the moon is cold and the sun is hot. There are a number of beliefs and superstitions concerning the moon. It is good luck to see the new moon before any stars are out in the sky. On seeing the new moon for the first time a Kol may either tear a corner off one of his garments and cast it toward the moon, or may hold up the garment toward the moon, saying: "Take these old clothes and give me new ones." It is usual at the same time to take worn-out pieces of cloth or just rags, and hang them on the tree near the house. This attracts the goddess of torn clothes, Chithra *devi*, who will bring good luck and in the course of time new garments.

The moon is thought to have no evil influences upon men folk and therefore is not feared by them. Women, however, are likely to be affected by the moon and as far as possible should avoid it. Pregnant women especially should not expose themselves to the moon as it is liable to cause a miscarriage or a deformed infant.

The time of an eclipse of either the sun or the moon is a time of special precaution and worship. The Kols say that the sun is devoured by a giant whom they call Dhrubh. The concept that a demon devours the sun is common all over India, but the usual Hindu concept is that it is swallowed by one named Rahu, the "looser or seizer." The Kol story goes that both the sun and the moon at one time borrowed something from Dhrubh, whom Kols call the brother of Indra. This debt must be repaid, and if at any time the sun or the moon is not able to pay on the debt, it is attacked by Dhrubh who begins to devour it. He never quite does so, however and vomits it up, as there is still money owing and payments must go on. Others say that Dhrubh is merely jealous of the moon because she is worshipped and adored while he is not. Therefore he attacks either the sun or the moon. One should bathe at the time of an eclipse. During such a time women should remain inside for it is a very dangerous season especially if they are with child. The men may go out to bathe, sing and beat the drums. Wicked spirits are abroad, and unless the women are protected by charms, they are liable to be attacked. After the release of the sun or moon, the women go out to bathe. The Nerbudda is the best place in Central India, but any tank or river will do if one cannot go so far. After bathing they should give some alms to Basors who will be waiting near by. They give to no others.

At home no food is prepared or eaten during the eclipse. Nothing cooked is left in the house, and all uncooked food should be carefully protected so as not to become a prey to the evil spirits. All the earthen vessels used in connection with food and water should be thrown out

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

and new ones brought in. Metal vessels are not affected. Hindu influences are apparent.

Rivers. The Kols say that there are but two rivers in India which are really sacred, the Ganges and the Nerbudda. They put the Ganges in the first place. Like most Hindus, Kols believe that it is good to bathe in these rivers and that to do so will help to wash away sin and give one merit. Kols in the vicinity of Jubbulpore frequently go to the Nerbudda, but seldom to the Ganges.

GODS AND GODDESSES WORSHIPPED BY KOLS. The worship to which the Kols really give themselves is not that of the gods of the Hindu pantheon, nor the forces or the powers of nature, but rather of the village deities—*deotas* and *devis*—who are intimately connected with their daily life and outlook. The majority of these deities are female, and it is such deities that really count. They are termed "mothers," and many have *mai* meaning "mother" attached to their name. The male deities are called *babas*, "fathers"; or *deos*, "godlings."

The Kol Pantheon. Among Hindus the Supreme Being is worshipped as Vishnu by the Vaishnavas and as Siva by the Saivas. Others who worship the Supreme deity exclusively as a female principle are called Saktas. The wives of Vishnu or Siva may be worshipped as Lakshmi and Parvati, thus introducing the female principle. Nevertheless the *devi* is secondary to the *deva*. In the case of Sakti worship, the Devi is made supreme and the absolute Brahma from whom Brahma, Vishnu and Siva proceed, can do nothing without her activity. This form of religion is seen particularly in Tantra and Sakta Hinduism.

The goddess of the Saktas may be called by the general term "Devi," but is worshipped in many forms. Various aspects of her life or achievements are remembered under different names, and she even may assume the form of a male. The worship of Devi is usually associated with Siva, rather than Vishnu, and many of the concomitants of Saivitism are associated with her worship.

From the evidence that follows, which is largely from the lips of Kols, it would appear that the Devi principle is the main factor at work in the Kols' idea of deity. Khermai is occasionally given an all-inclusive aspect. Bhagavati is essentially Devi. She has "six sisters" who are really forms of herself.[1] Kols have never been

[1] "In all parts of South India the seven sisters are the most prominent among Dravidian deities." —Elmore, W. T., *Dravidian Gods in Modern Hinduism*, p. 18. He names the following as examples, though he notes their names vary from place to place: Poleramma, Ankamma, Muthyalamma, Dilli Pedasi, Bangaramma, Mathoramma and Renuka.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS OF THE KOLS. The chief religious festivals that Kols have interest in are the following: 796

Amavasya—"No moon day." Monthly.
Dasera—on the tenth (*dasa*) day of the month Kunwar.
Dewali—lamp festival, first day of Kartik, twenty days after Dasara.
Hardi—"greenery", during the monsoon time: Srawan.
Hariyari—a form of Hareli.
Holi—the spring equinoctial festival in the month of Phag at full moon.
Jawara—twice a year: just before Holi and again before Dasara.
Khajleniya—a portion of the Jawara festival and sometimes a synonym for it.
Khicheri—named but not clearly differentiated.
Marpak—in memory of the dead.
Nagpanchami—the snake festival in Srawan.
Naodurgan—a part of the Jawara festival.
Phag—the same as Holi.
Pusan—a festival known in Rewa.
Rakhi—"protector", the ceremony of amulet tying. In Sawan.
Ramnavami—Ram's birthday, 9th day of Chait.
Sirwani—another name for the Rakhi festival.
Tija—another name for Khajleniya.

These festivals however, are not all of equal value, but as far as possible we have given a description of them and of how the Kols [171] enter into the same. Hindu influences are apparent.

Amavasya. This is a monthly festival and is observed on the 796 day when the moon is "new" that is, on the dark of the moon. It is 197 only observed, however, by the more Hinduised Kols. As the new [821] moon comes forth in its purity, all should be made ready to receive her. The women busy themselves in cleaning and plastering their houses, mending the holes or broken plaster, and making everything spick and span. The men may go to the Nerbudda to bathe. Among Hindus much attention is paid to Amavasya, and should it fall on Monday "it is sacred, people fast, bathe, make gifts to Brahmins, and worship the holy Fig tree."[1] In this connection the Kols will pluck off bits of their garments and throw them toward the moon, as described on previous pages.[2] The festival is apparently a Vedic one and needless

1 Crooke, W., *Religion & Folklore of Northern India*, p. 35.
2 See pp. 131, 136.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

796 177 to say, Kols living away from strong Hindu influences do not pay particular attention to this, although it is known and mentioned.

Dasara is a very important Hindu festival and is celebrated on the tenth day of the Hindu month *Kunwar*—portions of September and October. In this case again, the Kols enter into it quite freely, yet it is not one of their important festivals. The Hindu legends connected with this day seem to indicate that it is a day to celebrate a victory and hold military displays.

[788] Any observation among the Kols usually takes the form of a procession of men to the village boundary, carrying with them lights and torches, the procession being marked by the beating of drums and the singing of the men. From there they return home rejoicing as if from a victory, and are greeted by the women who have a feast ready.

It is also a semi-agricultural festival with some, as the wheat should not be sown till after *Dasara*. Ten days before *Dasara* wheat is sown in the houses. This is discussed in connection with the *Jawara* festival,[1] which seems to be the most important to the Kol and overlaps both *Dasara* and *Holi*.

● [821] *Devali*. This is the feast of lights and comes twenty days after *Dasara*, and is held on the new moon day (*Amavasya*) of the Hindu month *Kartik* (October-November). This too is predominantly a Hindu festival, and the Kols observance is largely by imitation. Hindus set out lights, and the illuminations, particularly in cities [775] where it is well observed, are very beautiful. The Hindu believes that on this night the souls of the good dead return to visit their old haunts. So the houses are made ready—all is clean; old earthen lamps are thrown away and new ones replace them. The new ones should burn all night, and the family will stay up to receive the spirits of their deceased, not yet reborn.

Kols usually go no further than first burning a *diya* inside the house in front of the inner place of worship, invoking, they say, Shardamai, though the names of all the gods and goddesses known to them should be uttered before the shrine, as well as the names of their own sainted dead. Then the lamp is taken up and together with a few others is set on the doorstep to guide the spirit. If the Kol has any wealth, he may worship that too; but there is usually so little that they do not take it into account.

Hareli. The word literally means "greenery", and it appears that only the Hinduized Kols have much knowledge of it. Among

1 Page 189.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

796 successful the ceremony. Last of all the whole is covered with a layer of dry grass.

[177 793] The time for the actual lighting is learned from the Hindu *pandit* who knows horoscopy and can tell it exactly. Theoretically the pile should be lighted at full moon, when the sun and the moon are exactly [821] in opposition. This may occur before sunset, and if so, the pile should be lighted as soon as dusk has fallen. It was to be lighted in the case we investigated at 3 a.m. When the hour has come, all who take [522] part in the festivities gather round the sacred pile with much laughing and vulgar jesting. A cocoanut is usually broken just as the fire is touched off. The fire is lit from burning cow dung cakes; and before [237 touched off, it is carried by the *panda* seven times around the pile 372] which is always kept to his right, so that he goes clockwise about it. The glowing cow dung cakes are then inserted into the wood and grass drawn over it, and the fire begins. One should never blow upon this fire to get it started. It should be fanned, but never blown from the mouth. Now the whole group will circumambulate the fire in a clockwise direction, throwing wheat or other gifts into it. Later on, as the fire dies down, some daring youths may jump over it or run through it. As the group goes about the fire, they shout: "*Hori ka, Hori mata*, take thou this wheat our *Hori mata*." *Hori* is used for *Holi*. Singing is kept up all night, and more wood may be thrown upon the fire.

796 With the lighting of the fire, the obscenity of this festival is loosened, and may be resorted to all night and the next day. Obscene 786 songs of the *Kabiri* type in which the sexual act is described with 831 appropriate gestures are sung. These are not directed against any particular individual, and no offense should be taken by anyone. A woman may snatch away a bit of the clothes of a man known to her, such as his cap or *pagri* or cloth flung over his shoulder. He must give her a present before he can recover it, and the hat should be filled with *gur* (raw sugar) and sweets before he can get it back. Sexual license is permitted at this time.

[787] Certain prophecies about the coming harvest are made by observing the way the fire burns, the smoke rises, and how it is carried away by the wind.

On the day following liberties of all kinds are taken with people. Dust, mud, dirt, and water coloured red, are thrown over passers-by. Sugar garlands are exchanged and indecent remarks passed. *Kabiri* [533] songs and others celebrating Krishna's love affairs are sung. The more shameless a lowcaste man can be, the more lustily he is cheered by his companions. There is no redress for those insulted on this

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

putrid behind. She often dwells in a palm tree. Certain Munda tribes, like the Bhuiyas, sometimes extract the fetus from a woman dying in pregnancy, and the two are buried on the opposite sides of a stream, as it is the theory that no spirit can cross water.[1] If the two should join they become witches. Kols do not practice this as far as we were able to learn, and no operation of this nature is performed. The woman is buried with the child still in her womb.

The Danawa is said by the Kols to be one of the most powerful of all spirits. He is likely related to the Vedic *Danava* who was connected with Vritra, one of the atmospheric demons. He lives in tall trees, and, if he can get the opportunity, attacks one at night, catching his victim round the throat and almost choking the unfortunate person to death. He is particularly met with in the Kaimur jungles.

The Jind, or more popularly *Jin*, according to the Kols, is the spirit of a Mohammedan, although it is usually considered one of the many kinds of spirits known to Mohammedans. Kols have a very bad opinion of *Jinds*, yet say that they know little about them, as they do not pay much attention to Kols but are out to injure Mohammedans.

The Kabbis is a lover of human blood. This demon has long teeth and sharp nails and attacks one ferociously. The nails are used to make deep cuts which let the blood flow and it is sucked or licked up by them. If the victim should struggle and give trouble, the demon will plunge his long teeth into the body and thus hold him while he drains out the man's life blood.

Matia is the demon of the whirlwind. It may destroy crops, bring up great storms and carry away roofs and thatch houses. During the warm season whirlwinds are common and one can trace their course by a cloud of dust reaching far up into the sky. Vultures soar about, looking for those whom *Matia* may destroy.

The Pret is the spirit of the deformed, the cripple, or the mentally defective. Males become *prets* and females are *pretins*. While Kols commonly mention them they usually do not believe them to be very dangerous, nor can they cause much trouble. Rather they should be pitied and fed, so sometimes food and water are placed out for them if they are suspected of being in the vicinity.

The Rakshasa is a terrible injurer and the very name of this demon is an euphemism, 'the preserver.' Most Kols have a great fear of a *rakshasa* and the report is that this kind is more commonly seen than any other and that they also suck blood if they can get a chance. They are usually about at night time and are very dangerous to women who are with child, and try to gain access to the house by

1. Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 186.

li:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

and fearful for at least twelve years. Usually such spirits are not dangerous, and some have said that after twelve years they go to Bhagwan or may be born into the world again. 762 775

Sometimes the woman may die in childbirth and the child be born alive. If so, it is thought very likely that the child owes its life to an evil spirit, who desires it for some evil purpose, and hence the child may really be a *bhut*. It is very difficult to get a wet nurse for such children and they usually do not survive very long. 845 776 775

We happened to be in a Kol village a few hours after an earthquake and we asked a group what caused the movement of the earth. Nearly all at once agreed that the earth shook because of *pap*, or sin. One or two though, began to think and said that the real reason was that the earth rested upon the heads of *Nag*—a many-headed serpent, and that once in twelve years he had to shift the earth from one head to another and that produced an earthquake. But when confronted with the obvious fact that an earthquake came oftener than once in twelve years they were puzzled and could not account for it. The latter explanation is the one frequently advanced among Hindus, but Kols were not very familiar with it. 823 [773] 177]

Rain, so intimately connected with the welfare of forest people, may often be brought to pass by magical processes, and there are frequent instances of this among the tribes and castes of Central Provinces. In many of these rites nudity is an essential part, for moved by pity at their representation of poverty, Indra or some rain *devta* will grant refreshing showers. No trace of nudity practices was found among the Kols. The more sophisticated Kol believes that rain is sent only by Indra, the Vedic god of rain, and that it is only through a Brahmin that the gift of rain may be secured. 821 [291] [177]

Some Kols use frogs in an attempt to bring the rains. Frogs and rains are intimately associated in their minds, for in the weeks that precede the coming of the monsoon, the frogs croak long and loudly, and it is thought that their calls bring the showers. So if the monsoon is delayed and there is a drouth, Kol boys will round up all the frogs they can. The larger they are the better for this purpose. A thread is tied round the leg of each frog and they are then dragged about the village. As they pass by houses the people living there come out and sprinkle a bit of water over them. The boys and their frogs finally end up at the village shrine and the latter are tied before the *devi*. It is said that the croaking of the frogs at the shrine will affect the *devi* resident there and she too will long for cooling showers, so she gets to work and uses her influence and power to help bring the rain to pass. 821 825 789